

economic impact of the loss of 1 foot of draft is \$373 million. The majority of this impact is lost business opportunities due to light loading of non-containerized vessels. If the dredging crisis at the port continues to worsen, this cost will quickly accelerate.

This amendment will help alleviate the crisis. The Port of Houston will get more desperately needed dredging funding. I strongly support this amendment and urge my colleagues to do the same.

IN SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF
MARSHALL KOBYSKI ON HIS
OFFER OF APPOINTMENT TO AT-
TEND THE UNITED STATES MILI-
TARY ACADEMY

HON. ROBERT E. LATTA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 19, 2012

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to pay special tribute to an outstanding student from Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. I am pleased to announce that Marshall Kobyski of Bowling Green, Ohio has been offered an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York.

Marshall's offer of appointment poises him to attend the United States Military Academy this fall with the incoming cadet Class of 2016. Attending one of our Nation's military academies not only offers the opportunity to serve our country but also guarantees a world-class education, while placing demands on those who undertake one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of their lives.

Marshall brings an enormous amount of leadership, service, and dedication to the incoming Class of 2016. While attending Bowling Green Senior High School in Bowling Green, Ohio, Marshall was a member of the National Honor Society, participant in the Ohio Energy Project, President of the Chess Club, and a Buckeye Boys State delegate.

Throughout high school, Marshall was a member of his school's cross country and track teams and earned varsity letters in both sports. In addition, Marshall participated in various church based organizations, including the youth group. I am confident that Marshall will carry the lessons of his student and athletic leadership to the Military Academy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Marshall Kobyski on the offer of his appointment to the United States Military Academy. Our service academies offer the finest military training and education available. I am positive that Marshall will excel during his career at the Military Academy, and I ask my colleagues to join me in extending their best wishes to him as he begins his service to the Nation.

IN RECOGNITION OF ALLEN M.
PROWS

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 19, 2012

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Officer Allen Prows for his 31 years of service at the Daly City Police Department.

Mr. Prows was appointed police officer in 1980 and graduated from the Northern California Criminal Justice Training Center Academy at College of the Redwoods in Eureka, California.

Upon completion of the field training program, Officer Prows began his extensive career as a patrol officer. Working all shifts, he rose quickly from rookie to seasoned veteran in the patrol division where he spent his entire career. He is highly respected by his fellow officers and citizens alike and has received numerous letters of appreciation from residents and recognition for good team work with unit commanders from the department.

Officer Prows was awarded several departmental commendations, including one in 1986 for his part in the capture of two suspects who had vandalized Jefferson High School with graffiti and broken windows. He received another one in 1991 for being part of a team that apprehended a bank robbery suspect.

Allen Prows graduated from Newark High School in 1975. He earned an Associate of Arts degree from Ohlone Community College.

He lives in South San Francisco and is the proud father of two sons, Kevin and Mathew.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this body to rise with me to honor the service of Officer Allen Prows to the residents of Daly City. For over three decades, he has been dedicated to our community and made it a safer and better place.

H.R. 4335, THE POSTAL SERVICE
ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 19, 2012

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, on March 29, I introduced H.R. 4335, the Postal Service Accountability Act.

My bill would empower the independent postal regulator, the Postal Regulatory Commission, PRC, to block postal closures where the Postal Service, USPS, does not give sufficient attention to the undue burden a closure would have on a community.

Under current law, when the Postal Service is considering closing a post office, the affected public must be notified. The Postal Service opens a 60-day comment period, which includes a public meeting to allow local citizens a chance to voice their concerns. Once the public comment period closes, should the Postal Service decide to close a post office, the public has 30 days to appeal the decision to the Postal Regulatory Commission.

According to the Congressional Research Service, the PRC may fault the USPS' decision to close a post office only if the PRC finds the decision to be arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, or otherwise not in accordance with the law; without observance of procedure required by law; or unsupported by substantial evidence on the record. The PRC may require the USPS to reconsider its decision, but the ultimate authority to close a post office rests with the USPS.

My bill would give the PRC a binding authority to block a post office closure. It would require the Postal Service to consider the economic impact of a closure on a community, and empower the PRC to set aside a deter-

mination that is unsupported by substantial evidence regarding projected savings, mail delivery services, and community and worker impact. In addition, the Postal Service would be required to perform an after-the-fact review one year after a closure and make public its findings to ensure mail delivery services have been maintained.

My bill also would apply the revised appeals process to postal sorting facilities. Currently, there is no appeals process for mail processing facilities.

As well, my measure would prevent the Postal Service from proceeding with a closure without the written concurrence of three commissioners, halting the dubious practice of affirming closures by tie votes.

These are modest and practical changes designed to ensure that the Postal Service approaches these closures with an open mind and listens respectfully and attentively to community opinion. At issue is the basic right of citizens of a community to be heard. It will help to guard against the bureaucratic mentality, which too often takes root in executive agencies, that agency officials know best. We must ensure that the Postal Service's actions are grounded in the best interests of the people it was created to serve.

In July 2011, when the Postal Service announced its Retail Access Optimization Initiative and its intention to study nearly 3,700 post offices nationwide for closure, including 85 in southern West Virginia, the Postal Service was already pursuing a host of closure studies for separate post offices, as well as the consolidation of postal sorting facilities, including eighteen post offices and three processing facilities in southern West Virginia.

Under the law, the Postal Service is required to consider the impact of a post office closure on a community, on the affected postal workers, and on mail delivery services. Federal law requires the USPS to "provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to rural areas, communities, and small towns where post offices are not self-sustaining."

And, yet, there have been serious doubts raised about the Postal Service's adherence to these requirements. In its advisory opinion on the Postal Service's RA01 proposal, the PRC found that the Postal Service was unable to provide the data necessary to confirm its cost savings projections associated with the post offices proposed for closure. The Commission also expressed concerns about ensuring that alternatives are available to meet the needs of affected communities prior to a postal facility closure decision.

In a concurring opinion, the PRC chairman strongly rebuked the Postal Service's closure process, noting: "The Commission has recently heard appeals on more than 60 individual post office closings. The records in these cases reveal a pattern of inaccurate and overly optimistic economic savings calculations and of careless disregard of community concerns. While the facts of those cases were not considered by the Commission in its Advisory Opinion, they nevertheless demonstrate an ongoing institutional bias within the Postal Service that presumes closing small post offices automatically provides cost savings and network efficiencies."

The PRC's findings echo what I am hearing anecdotally from my constituents—that the public comment process is a perfunctory exercise—just for show—as the Postal Service